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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/865,878	05/25/2001	Susan Phillips	40655.1700	5094
20322	7590	09/08/2004	EXAMINER COBY, FRANTZ	
SNELL & WILMER ONE ARIZONA CENTER 400 EAST VAN BUREN PHOENIX, AZ 850040001			ART UNIT 2171	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 09/08/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

09/865,878

**Applicant(s)**

PHILLIPS ET AL.

**Examiner**

Frantz Coby

**Art Unit**

2171

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 May 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 06-25-01.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

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This is in response to Applicant's response filed on May 12, 2004 in which Group I consisting of claims 1-41 were elected and Group II consisting of claims 42-43 were canceled.

**Status of Claims**

Claims 1-41 are pending.

***Information Disclosure Statement***

The information disclosure statement filed May 25, 2001 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609. It has been placed in the application file and the information referred to therein has been considered as to the merits.

***Specification***

Claim 36 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because the claim recites "A computer implemented service according to claim," however, is silent on the claim number that claim 36 is dependent on. Accordingly, the claim 36 not been further treated on the merits.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 34-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As per claim 34, the claim recites, "those of said those of said third plurality" in line 3. Pronouns are not allowed only what is being referred by those should be set forth in the claim.

As per claim 35, this claim is rejected at least for its dependency on the rejected claim 34 above.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Block U.S. Patent no. 5,960,416 in view of Geerlings U.S. Patent no. 5,956,693.

As per claim 1, Block discloses "a computer implemented service for updating a merchant customer account database over a network" by providing a real time subscriber billing system that calculates charges for a desired service at a subscriber location in a communication network" (See Block Col. 3, lines 9-12). In particular, Block discloses the claimed feature of "first comparison data file comprising a first record including a compilation of said merchant processing requests accepted for processing by said process server, said first comparison data file further comprising a second record including a compilation of said merchant processing requests rejected for processing by said process said process server" (See Block Abstract). Further, Block discloses the claimed features of "process server further configured to update said first

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database of information in accordance with said merchant processing request data file”  
(See Block Col. 3, lines 40-46).

It is noted, however, Block did not specifically detail the claimed limitations of “a first database of information having a plurality of merchant customer records and a remote merchant customer database having a first plurality of customer account” as a first and second database” as recited in the instant claim. On the other hand, Geerlings discloses the aforementioned claimed features by providing a computer system for merchant communication to customers including a first database that stores identification and demographics of customers and a second database that stores communication information and indications of contents of communications (See Geerlings Col. 2, lines 12-20). Also, Block did not specifically detail the aspect of “a merchant process server for appending a merchant processing request to at least records; one of said first plurality of customer accounts to produce a merchant processing request data file; and a process server for receiving said first database of information and said merchant processing request data file, said process server configured to compare said first database of information and said merchant processing request data file to produce a first comparison data file” as recited in the instant claim. On the other hand, Geerlings discloses the aforementioned claimed features by providing a computer system for merchant communication to customers including processors for appending data as well as producing data file (See Geerlings Col. 2, lines 21-50).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the billing system of block wherein the network device provided thereof (See Block Figure 1, component 30) would have incorporated the databases of Geerlings and a mechanism for producing a data file. The motivation being to have enhanced the billing system of Block by allowing it to efficiently permit merchants and customers to communicate and enable merchants communication of a desired message to an appropriate recipient group at a desired time to be automated through computer means (See Geerlings Abstract).

As per claim 2, most of the limitations of this claim have been noted in the rejection of claim 1. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claim 1 above. In addition, Geerlings discloses the claimed limitations of "wherein, said service further comprises a second database of information having a second plurality of customer transaction accounts records" as a marketing database 19 of figure 1 where customers information is stored (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 22-30).

As per claim 3, most of the limitations of this claim have been noted in the rejection of claim 2. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claim 2 above. In addition, Geerlings discloses the claimed limitations of "wherein, said process server is configured to receive said second database of information, said process server configured to compare said first database of information and said second database of information to produce a second comparison data file, said second comparison file



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comprising a plurality of updated customer transaction account records, said process server further configured to update said first database of information in accordance with said second database of information” (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 31-44).

As per claim 4, most of the limitations of this claim have been noted in the rejection of claim 4. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claim 4 above. In addition, Geerlings discloses the claimed limitations of “wherein, said process server is further configured to append a provider processing instruction to at least one of said plurality of updated customer transaction account records to produce a provider processing request data file” (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 37-44).

As per claim 5, most of the limitations of this claim have been noted in the rejection of claim 4. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claim 4 above. In addition, Geerlings discloses the claimed limitations of “wherein said process server is configured to provide an update summary file, said update summary comprising at least one of said first comparison data file and said provider processing request data file” as a definition database that holds file formats and layouts of the transmitted/downloaded data (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 40-44).

As per claims 6-13, most of the limitations of these claims have been noted in the rejection of claims 1-5. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claims 1-5 above. In addition, Geerlings discloses the claimed limitations of “wherein said update

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summary report is provided to said merchant process server periodically" since merchant constantly updates the shopping activity information (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 32-33; Col 6, lines 13-16); "wherein, said merchant process server is configured to retrieve said update summary file" since online accessibility of the information stored in the databases is provided (See Geerlings Col. 4, lines 54-57) and a structured query language is provided (See Geerlings Col. 5, lines 58-61); "wherein, said merchant server is further configured to update said remote merchant customer database in accordance with said update summary file" since an update mechanism is provided (See Geerlings (Col. 4, lines 31-44); "wherein, said at least one of said first plurality of customer transaction account records is pre-authorized; wherein, said at least one of said first plurality of distinct customer transaction account records is provided a merchant processing request indicating that said at least one of said first plurality of customer transaction account records is to be removed from at least one of said plurality of merchant customer record; wherein said at least one of said first plurality of customer transaction account records is provided a merchant processing request indicating that said at least one of said first plurality of distinct customer transaction card records requires alteration by said process server; wherein said remote merchant customer database is configured to be updated manually; wherein said merchant server is configured to update said remote merchant customer database in accordance with said provider processing instruction" all update request are achieved through the update mechanism as shown in (Geerlings Col. 4, lines 31-44).

As per claims 14-22, most of the limitations of these claims have been noted in the rejection of claims 1-13. Applicant's attention is directed to the rejection of claims 1-13 above. In addition, Block discloses the claimed limitations of "wherein said rejected merchant process request is verified" since a determination is made based on the account information whether the subscriber has a sufficient balance for a desired service. Service is authorized or denied based on the determination (See Block Abstract). The Applicant should duly note that it is the merchant that process the request made by the subscriber. Therefore, a denied of the subscriber, yield a denied of the merchant's process request. As to the claimed features of " wherein said merchant process server appends said verified rejected merchant process request to said merchant process request data file"; " wherein said merchant process request data file includes said verified rejected merchant process request"; "wherein said process server is configured to tally the number of rejected merchant processing request"; "wherein said process server comprises a predetermined rejection threshold"; wherein said process server compares the rejection threshold to said tally of the number of rejected merchant process request, said process server further configured reject said merchant process request data file when the rejection threshold is reached"; "wherein said process server is configured to tally said accepted merchant processing request, in accordance with a merchant process request grouping"; "wherein said update summary file comprises said tally said accepted merchant processing request" and " wherein at least one of said first plurality of customer transaction accounts is outdated, said process server being configured to add said outdated at least one of said first plurality of

customer transaction account records to said first database of information, said outdated one of said first plurality of customer transaction account records remaining permanently fixed", these are features of the verification strategy of Block's billing system. They are therefore primarily incorporated in the billing system of Block.

As per claims 23-41, all the limitations of these claims have been noted in the rejection of claims 1-22. They are therefore rejected as set forth above. In addition, the combination of Block-Geerlings can implement a merchant database to have a number of customer transaction account records, including providing a transaction account record in a registry file, using the plurality of databases of Geerlings (See Geerlings Figure 1 and corresponding text).


### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Frantz Coby whose telephone number is 703 305-4006. The examiner can normally be reached on Maxi-Flex (Monday-Saturday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Safet Metjahic can be reached on 703 308-1436. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Frantz Coby  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2171

September 4, 2004